

## American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

### January 14-31, 2012

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January 31, 2013

#### Today's Top Stories

1. **Former youth leader Charles Ble Goude appears before a court in Abidjan over human rights crimes**
2. **Opposition coalition to boycott upcoming local elections**
3. **Government orders the exhumation of mass graves reported during the electoral crisis**
4. **Press freedom has improved in Cote d'Ivoire new report says**

#### **1. Former youth leader Charles Ble Goude appears before a court in Abidjan over human rights crimes**

Former youth leader and aide to former Ivoirian president Laurent Gbagbo, Charles Ble Goude, was questioned yesterday by a judge in Abidjan over his role during the post-electoral crisis that claimed the lives of more than 3000 people. The information was diversely commented upon in today's papers. According to **L'Inter (p. 2)** Mr. Ble Goude, who was accompanied by his wife and attorneys, refused to respond to the court. In a separate development, the paper noted that Ble Goude's lawyers complained he is being "morally tortured." "He is being detained outside of Abidjan, somewhere in a private house and not a correctional facility as appropriate...this is unfair," the paper reported his attorney Claver Ndri as saying. According to Mr. Ndri there is no deal between his client and the Ivorian government as is being reported. "He [Ble Goude] was arrested and transferred to Cote d'Ivoire without his consent...Therefore there could not be any agreement between him and the Abidjan regime," the attorney added.

**Nord Sud Quotidien (p. 3)** said the six-hour hearing with the judge has paid off. The daily alleged that the ex-youth leader has named members from former Ivoirian president Gbagbo's inner circle involved in the violence.

In a related story, **Le Quotidien d'Abidjan (p. 3)** said hundreds of Ble Goude supporters gathered yesterday in the yard of the justice hall. They were later chased by police along with reporters who came to cover the trial, the paper said.

## **2. Opposition coalition to boycott upcoming local elections**

A coalition of opposition parties dubbed *Agir pour la Nation* (APN) said it will not take part in the upcoming mayoral and regional elections. The information was reported by **Soir Info (p. 6)** which noted the political coalition, which gathered parties close to former Ivoirian president Gbagbo but does not include his FPI party, argued its decision stemmed from the government's refusal to address their concerns. "Our concerns involve the reconfiguration of the electoral body to ensure fairness but they have all been ignored," the paper reported APN spokesperson Daniel Boni Claverie as saying. At the same time, the daily says members of the APN have commended the government for talks initiated with the FPI and hope these talks will pave the way for national cohesion and reconciliation.

## **3. Government orders the exhumation of mass grave reported during the electoral crisis**

The Ivorian government has decided to authorize forensic exhumations in order to investigate crimes committed during the post-electoral crisis. Providing details, **Le Nouveau Reveil (p. 5)** said the decision came out of yesterday's cabinet meeting. According to government spokesperson Bruno Kone, remains in mass graves will be retrieved to allow in-depth investigations and to return the remains to the next-of-kin in order to ensure the deceased are granted proper burials. The remains of nearly 800 people are involved in this process, the paper added.

In a related story, **Le Nouveau Courrier (p. 4)** said the US\$200,000-operation is strictly limited to the Abidjan region and does not include victims of the attack on the Nahibly refugee camp in west Cote d'Ivoire last year.

## **4. Press freedom has improved in Cote d'Ivoire new report says**

According to a recent report by Reporters Without Borders, press freedom has improved in Cote d'Ivoire. The information was reported by **Le Patriote (p. 4)** which said the country has gained 63 points and is now ranked 96. Together with Malawi, the two have made the largest gains, the paper added.

**JANUARY 30, 2013**

**Today's Top Stories**

- 1. Dailies announce progress in government-opposition dialogue**
- 2. Military reform: A panel tasked to establish code of ethics**
- 3. Charged with crimes against humanity, Ivorian youth leader to be questioned today**
- 4. Cote d'Ivoire to contribute to reconstruction efforts in Mali**

**1. Dailies announce progress in government-opposition dialogue**

The direct dialogue between the Ivorian government and the principal opposition FPI party is the major issue in the press today. According to a prominent headline in ***Le Quotidien d'Abidjan***, the two sides, after a meeting yesterday, unanimously agreed on "a general amnesty" to be granted for all those who were accused of committing crimes in the post-electoral violence in 2011. The article (**p. 3**) also suggests that only the commission working on security issues, led by Interior Minister Hamed Bakayoko, was opposed to the idea. In another prominent headline, the paper speculates that "other political prisoners could be released on February 15."

Other media outlets, including ***L'Intelligent d'Abidjan***, also express optimism about the outcome of the discussions between the government and the FPI party. A front-page headline suggests that the government and the party of former Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo have reached "a minimum agreement." ***Le Nouveau Reveil*** (**p. 1**) reports Interior Minister Bakayoko as announcing the two sides have reached "some agreements." "Some progress has been made," another front-page headline in this paper says, quoting FPI's spokesperson Michel Amani N'Guessan.

Meanwhile, ***Notre Voie*** expresses a different point of view about the outcome of the dialogue. There was no "white smoke" after yesterday's meeting, reports the paper (**p. 5**) which quotes a leading member of the opposition FPI party as saying, "the main issue remains the release of all the political prisoners including [former] President Gbagbo."

In a related development, a report in ***Le Nouveau Courrier*** (**p. 5**) says head of the UN Mission in Cote d'Ivoire Bert Koenders is urging the government and the opposition FPI party to find an agreement.

**2. Military reform: A panel tasked to establish code of ethics**

The government has tasked a panel to come out with recommendations on a code of ethics for the military, reports ***Le Patriote*** (**p. 2**). The move, reports the paper, is part of the ongoing reforms within the Ivorian military. It also seeks, among other things, to put in place "strong institutions in order to ensure good governance," the paper quotes an official from the Ministry of Defense as saying.

**3. Charged with crimes against humanity, Ivorian youth leader to be questioned today**

According to a front-page headline in ***Nord-Sud Quotidien***, Ivorian youth leader Charles Ble Goude, who was charged with crimes against humanity, is to be questioned today by a judge in

Abidjan. According to the paper **(p. 3)** the hearing will not be open to the public. Mr. Ble Goude, who was arrested nearly two weeks ago in Ghana and extradited to Cote d'Ivoire, has already been charged by Ivorian authorities with war crimes, murder and theft of public funds.

While the youth leader is being detained in his home country, speculations continue on whether he should be tried in Cote d'Ivoire or transferred to the International Criminal Court (ICC). "Ouattara is opposed to the transfer of Ble Goude," reads a prominent headline in **L'Inter**. The article **(p. 4)** suggests that by charging the Ivorian youth leader, Ivorian authorities wanted to send a message to the international community that it has the capacity to try all those who are accused of crimes during the post-electoral violence in Cote d'Ivoire.

Another article in **L'Inter (p. 4)** claims that, despite the fact that the youth leader is formerly charged by the authorities in Cote d'Ivoire, he can still be indicted by the ICC. **Soir Info (p. 1)** speculates that former Ivorian military officers including former head of defense staff General Philippe Mangou and aide to former president Gbagbo, General Brunot Dogbo Ble, could be prosecuted by the ICC.

#### **4. Cote d'Ivoire to contribute to reconstruction efforts in Mali**

Cote d'Ivoire has decided to contribute US \$2 million in support of efforts by the West African regional bloc ECOWAS to restore peace in Mali, reports **Le Nouveau Reveil (p. 3)**. According to the paper, President Alassane Ouattara made the announcement during the recently-concluded Summit of the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. President Ouattara, who returned home yesterday after the summit, said it was a success, reports **Fraternite Matin (p. 1)**. About the war in Mali, the Ivorian leader said, "This is a great triumph in the combat against terrorism."

**January 29, 2013**

**Today's Top Stories**

1. ICC prosecutor says former president Laurent Gbagbo was directly involved in post-electoral violence
2. No breakthrough from on-going government-opposition talks
3. 10 million dollars to go for infrastructure improvements
4. Candidates in upcoming mayoral and regional elections raise concerns within political parties

**1. ICC prosecutor says former president Laurent Gbagbo was directly involved in post-electoral violence**

In a document released yesterday, prosecutor of the International Criminal Court Fatou Bensouda said former Ivoirian president Laurent Gbagbo was directly involved in the violence that followed the 2010 presidential elections. The information was diversely commented upon in today's papers. According to ***L'Inter (p. 4)*** the document contains a total of 108 counts against the former president accusing him of having attempted, by all means, to hold onto power, "through sustained attacks, carefully planned, deadly, widespread and systematic, launched against civilians who opposed him."

***Soir Info (p. 3)*** carried a similar account adding that the 58-page document outlining the charges against the former president came as his hearing has been set for February 19.

Opposition paper ***Le Temps (p. 6)*** denounced the report as "biased." According to the daily, the document is nothing but opinions by papers close to President Alassane Ouattara. ***Notre Voie (p. 2)*** said the accusations contained in the document are baseless.

**2. No breakthrough from on-going government-opposition talks**

The meeting between the government and leadership of the former ruling party has not yet yielded tangible results. According to ***Le Patriote (p. 3)*** the four taskforces set up to carry out the discussions have finalized their negotiations but decisions are still pending.

***L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (p. 3)*** says Senegalese president Macky Sall has decided to step down as facilitator of the talks between the government and the FPI. Citing insiders, the paper said the stubbornness of the former ruling party and their refusal to make concessions are in part the reason behind his decision to quit.

**3. 200 million dollars to go for infrastructure improvements**

According to an article in ***Fraternite Matin (p. 19)*** the Ivorian government pledges to make available CFA 100 billion (US \$ 200 million) in a bid to rebuild the country's war-torn infrastructure. The announcement, the paper said, was made by Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan yesterday in a press conference held to kick off the project. Dubbed PRI-CI, the project is jointly managed and financed by the Ivoirian government and the World Bank, the paper said. The plan includes the reconstruction of roads, education and healthcare facilities as well as water, sanitation and street

lighting. Besides Abidjan, the project will be extended to include other cities such as San Pedro, Yamoussoukro and Abengourou, the paper said. "It is important to ensure upcountry cities are not left out of this project," the paper reported World Bank Director for Cote d'Ivoire Madani Tall as saying. The PRI-CI project is part of a 15-year plan to improve the country's infrastructure.

#### **4. Candidates in upcoming mayoral and regional elections raise concerns within political parties**

According to an article in ***Le Nouveau Reveil (p. 2)*** March 24 is a possible date for the mayoral and regional elections in Cote d'Ivoire. As candidates are preparing for the race, tensions are being reported within political parties. ***Le Patriote (p. 2)*** said within the RDR party, dissensions stem from independent candidates who have emerged after the party refused to sponsor their candidacy. The proliferation of such candidacies weakens the stability of the party, the paper said, adding that sanctions may be put in place against those candidates without party support.

Still on the elections, a clash within members of the RDR in the northern city of Dabakala left at least one man seriously injured. The information was reported by ***Le Patriote (p. 2)*** which noted that a conflict took place between supporters of two rival RDR candidates.

January 23, 2013

**Today's Top Stories**

1. **Ivorian expert discusses security reforms with partners**
2. **Speculation continues as youth leader Charles Ble Goude charged with war crimes**
3. **Workers union and government still at odds as civil servant strike continues**
4. **Hijacked oil tanker released by attackers, cargo discharged**
5. **500 Ivorian soldiers to support combat mission in Mali**

**1. Ivorian expert discusses security reforms with partners**

According to an article in *L'Inter* (p. 6) reforms of the Ivorian security sector were explained yesterday by the National Security Council (CNS) to its partners. Providing details, the daily noted that the reforms include 106 points to be implemented over the next ten years. According to Mr. Alain Richard Donwahi, the Secretary General of the National Security Council, the bottom line of the reforms is to design a strategic security policy and to ensure sufficient means are available to the different forces to conduct operations. Three battalions will be created during the first phase of the reforms, which will include infantrymen and combat engineers, the paper said. "We also plan to create a training center for non-commissioned military personnel and to streamline the chain of command to facilitate collaboration among the different forces," the paper reported Mr. Donwahi as saying. A special plan is to be adopted soon to reconfigure the Ivorian intelligence services, the paper also noted.

*Fraternite Matin* (p. 7) carried a similar account, adding that the reforms will demand substantive financial investment. International partners, including the Canadian government and the World Bank have so far pledged to support the implementation of these reforms, the paper said.

**2. Speculation continues as youth leader Charles Ble Goude charged with war crimes**

The arrest and extradition of fugitive youth leader Charles Ble Goude continued to trigger comments and speculation in the press. *Le Quotidien* (p. 3) alleged that before being charged yesterday with war crimes, former Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo's ally was offered a deal by President Alassane Ouattara. Citing insiders, the paper said President Ouattara unsuccessfully tried to convince the youth leader to read a prepared statement calling for peace and reconciliation. Mr. Ble Goude remains adamant on his position insisting on the release of supporters of former Ivorian president Gbagbo who have been detained since the capture of the former president, the paper said.

**3. Workers union and government still at odds as civil servant strike continues**

According to an article in *Le Temps* (p. 4) the strike launched Monday by the Ivorian civil servants union continues despite government threats to punish those who do not report to work. The daily noted that there is no sign of improvement as workers' rights activists and Ivorian Labor Minister Gnamien Konan remained divided on the issue of a pay increase. Both parties said they are not going to back down; a situation likely to cause "mayhem" in the public administration, the daily said.

Still on the issue, ***Soir Info (p. 8)*** said today's cabinet meeting is to decide on possible sanctions to take against those on strike.

#### **4. Hijacked oil tanker released by attackers, cargo discharged**

According to ***Fraternite Matin (p. 14)*** the oil tanker hijacked last week off the Ivorian coast was released on Tuesday near Ghana. The vessel, the ITRI, had been carrying about 5,000 tons of jet fuel when it was seized. The entire cargo on board was discharged by the pirates before it was released, the paper said.

Given that this was the second incident of this kind in this port, ***Le Temps (p. 5)*** said that the Abidjan port has become a dangerous place for vessels and a haven for pirates.

#### **5. 500 Ivorian soldiers to support combat mission in Mali**

500 soldiers from the Ivorian military will be sent to Mali to support combat operations. The information was reported by ***Nord Sud Quodien (p. 5)*** and was confirmed by Ivorian Defense Minister Paul Koffi Koffi. The Ivorian battalion will provide logistical support to the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA). Training of this battalion is to start soon, the paper said, adding that the U.S. will provide military equipment.

JANUARY 22, 2013

Today's Top Stories

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1. **Ivorian court charges youth leader Charles Ble Goude with war crimes**
2. **Gunmen seize a Panama-flagged tanker off Ivorian port of Abidjan**
3. **West African leaders meeting in Abidjan vowed to "free" Mali and fight "terrorism"**
4. **Assets of former president Gbagbo's allies unfrozen**
5. **NDI on peace campaign ahead of the upcoming local elections**
6. **Civil servants launch a three-day strike**

**1. Ivorian court charges youth leader Charles Ble Goude with war crimes**

A statement read yesterday on the state broadcaster, **RTI1**, said that Charles Ble Goude, the former Ivorian youth minister and ally of former Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo, has been charged with "war crimes, murder and theft of public funds" by a court in Abidjan. The broadcaster also carried footage of a handcuffed Ble Goude arriving at the court.

Mr. Ble Goude, who was quickly extradited from Ghana after being arrested this past Thursday, is also the subject of a front-page headline in **Fraternite Matin** which reports (**p. 7**) that the youth leader was presented yesterday to judges in Abidjan for a hearing in connection with crimes committed during the 2011 post-electoral crisis in Cote d'Ivoire.

"Ble Goude in jail since yesterday" reads a prominent headline in **Le Patriote**, while a front-page headline in **Le Nouveau Courrier** denounces what the paper sees as "winners' justice." Speaking about the indictment of the Ivorian youth leader, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Guillaume Soro, said "I would prefer a jail in my own country where I could face justice as opposed to living as a fugitive," reports **L'Inter** (**p. 3**).

According to a front-page headline in **Notre Voie** the opposition FPI party has called for "the immediate release" of Mr. Ble Goude, while a front-page headline in **L'Intelligent d'Abidjan** suggests that the arrest and indictment could be part of plans to "end" his political career. The paper (**p. 4**) also describes Mr. Blé Goudé as the "victim" of the power struggle to succeed former president Laurent Gbagbo.

**2. Gunmen seize a Panama-flagged tanker off Ivorian port of Abidjan**

A front-page report in **Nord-Sud Quotidien** says gunmen seized a tanker off Cote d'Ivoire's port of Abidjan. The Panama-flagged tanker, named the ITRI, was attacked as it prepared to unload 5,000 tons of fuel, the paper (**p. 10**) reports the port authorities as saying. A front-page story in **Le Nouveau Courrier** says the hijack of another tank at the port of Abidjan could send "a bad signal" to foreign investors who might be interested in doing business in Cote d'Ivoire.

### **3. West African leaders meeting in Abidjan vowed to “free” Mali and fight “terrorism”**

“The ECOWAS bloc has called for more international support to fight terrorism,” said a banner headline in the weekend issue of *Fraternite Matin*. According to the paper (**p. 4**), West African leaders made the statement on Saturday during an emergency meeting in Abidjan designed to hammer out the final details of a planned intervention to oust Islamist militants from northern Mali. Addressing the conference, Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara, the current chairman of ECOWAS, called on the international community to support the bloc’s efforts, while Benin’s President Yayi Boni, the current chairman of African Union said: “We want Africa to become a stable continent.” French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius was also reported (**p. 5**) as saying that the summit was “useful” and went on to justify French intervention in Mali saying: “France was obliged to intervene very, very rapidly; otherwise there would have been no more Mali.”

### **4. Assets of former president Gbagbo’s allies unfrozen**

A report in *Fraternite Matin* (**p. 7**) says that Switzerland authorities have announced that assets of 79 loyalists to former Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo have been unfrozen. The article quotes Switzerland authorities as saying that the decision was taken to comply with “the appeased” situation in Cote d’Ivoire.

### **5. NDI on peace campaign ahead of the upcoming local elections**

A report in Monday’s issue of *Le Jour Plus* said a conference on peace was recently held to bring together political and religious leaders, traditional chiefs as well as members of the civil society from the southwestern city of San Pedro. The program, which was organized by the National Institute for Democracy (NDI), was designed to foster dialogue among the population in advance of the upcoming elections.

### **6. Civil servants launch a three-day strike**

According to a front-page story in *Notre Voie*, public services were crippled yesterday as civil servants have embarked on a three-day strike to press for salary increase. The strike had been warned against for the last week if certain conditions were not met by the government.

January 18, 2013

**Today's Top Stories**

1. **Fugitive youth leader Charles Blé Goudé arrested in Ghana**
2. **ECOWAS troops begin arriving in Mali**
3. **President Ouattara calls on German businesses to invest in Cote d'Ivoire**
4. **Reforms in the Ivorian military limit length of service, open door to women**

**1. Fugitive youth leader Charles Blé Goudé arrested in Ghana**

Staunch supporter of former Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo and leader of the group "Young Patriots" Charles Blé Goudé was arrested yesterday in Ghana. The story was featured prominently today in all newspapers.

**Fraternite Matin (p. 7)** said Mr. Blé Goudé, who has been a fugitive since April 2011, was arrested by Interpol at his home in Ghana. Mr. Blé Goudé was a significant figure in both the administration of the former Ivorian president and during the post electoral crisis in Cote d'Ivoire that claimed more than 3,000 lives, the paper said.

**L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (p. 4)** said a lot of questions still exist regarding Mr. Blé Goudé's arrest. According to the daily, the move came after an arrest warrant was issued last year by Ivorian authorities against the fugitive political leader. There was also speculation that the arrest would lead to a transfer of Mr. Blé Goudé to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

**Le Quotidien (p. 3)** denied the arrest happened, saying that the youth leader escaped an attempted kidnapping by Ivorian police officers. The paper went on to denounce the government harassment campaign on exiled political figures. According to the daily, Mr. Blé Goudé is currently under the protection of Ghanaian intelligence agents after escaping his captors. **Le Temps (p. 3)** carried a similar account calling the story a plot to deceive people.

**2. ECOWAS troops begin arriving in Mali**

According to a report in **Nord Sud Quotiden (p. 11)** the Mission Internationale de Soutien au Mali (MISMA) started deploying soldiers yesterday to the war-torn country. 190 soldiers out of the 900 Nigeria pledged to send are en route to the combat zone, the paper said, adding that this was the first contingent from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to be deployed so far.

In a related issue, **Fraternite Matin (p. 22)** gave credit to President Alassane Ouattara for his efforts to gather international support during this week's trip to Germany as world leaders are mobilizing resources to support the country. The leaders of ECOWAS member countries are scheduled to meet tomorrow in Abidjan for an emergency summit to discuss developments in Mali, the paper said.

**3. President Ouattara calls on German businesses to invest in Cote d'Ivoire**

In an address made yesterday as he was concluding his trip to Germany, President Ouattara called on German business leaders to invest in Cote d'Ivoire and the region. The information was reported by **Le**

**Nouveau Reveil (p. 6)** which noted that, according to the Ivorian leader, the country now offers better business and development opportunities. The most promising sectors include agriculture, energy and infrastructure, he said.

#### **4. Reforms in the Ivorian military limit length of service, open door to women**

According to the an article in **Nord Sud Quotidien (p. 2)**, the length of service for Ivorian career military staff can now no longer exceed 15 years. The measure is part of recent military reforms, the paper said. The purpose of the reforms, according to Minister of Defense Paul Koffi Koffi, is to have a young, reliable military and command staff. The reforms also provide better career development opportunities and allow women to register at military schools.

January 17, 2013

**Today's Top Stories**

- 1. Germany pledges to support ECOWAS troops in meeting with Ivorian president**
- 2. FPI denounces a "biased" report as the UN security meets to assess the situation in Cote d'Ivoire**
- 3. The trial of FPI official Laurent Akoun postponed**
- 4. Cote d'Ivoire listed as African top country for hackers**

**1. Germany pledges to support ECOWAS troop in meeting with Ivorian president**

According to a report in *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (p. 5)*, Germany pledged yesterday to send two aircraft to support military operations in Mali. The announcement, the paper said, was made by German Minister of Defense Thomas de Maiziere, who underscored the move as part of logistical support to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) forces that will be engaged in combat operations in Mali.

This development came as a result of a meeting yesterday between President Alassane Ouattara, chairman of ECOWAS, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Providing details, *Fraternite Matin (p. 4)* said the two heads of state recognized the long history of cooperation between the two countries and committed to strengthening ties in the future. Cote d'Ivoire's 328 million Euro debt to Germany (approximately US \$438 million) could also be written-off as a result of the meeting, the paper said.

**2. FPI denounces a "biased" report as the UN security meets to assess the situation in Cote d'Ivoire**

According to an article in *Le Temps (p. 6)*, exiled leaders of the FPI (the party of former Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo) are preemptively calling into question an expected report from the UN Security Council. The report came as the Security Council was preparing to meet Wednesday to assess the security situation in Cote d'Ivoire. Citing the former party leaders who are still in exile, the paper denounced moves aimed at blaming supporters of Mr. Gbagbo for attacks on government forces.

*Le Nouveau Courrier (p. 2)* carried a similar account denouncing what they called a "vague" account by the UN on the assault on opposition printing company Cyclone last year, as well as unanswered requests the FPI sent to the UN mission in Cote d'Ivoire for closer protection for its ransacked Abidjan headquarters. The daily also alleged that the UN has blamed supporters of the former president for the stalled reconciliation process.

**3. The trial of FPI official Laurent Akoun postponed**

The trial of FPI official Laurent Akoun slated for yesterday was postponed. The information was reported by *Le Temps (p. 3)* which noted that a judge in Abidjan said pending administrative procedures were the reason for the decision. Despite arguments from his lawyers, the court denied

bail to Mr. Akoun who has been detained since August last year for allegedly breaching state security, the paper said. The trial has been rescheduled to January 30.

In a related story, ***L'Inter* (p. 3)** noted that Mr. Kone Katinan, a former aide to Mr. Gbagbo is scheduled to appear today before a court in Ghana over allegations of murder, economic crimes and conspiracy against the Ivorian government. Mr. Katinan was granted bail at an extradition hearing on September 25, but has not yet been extradited to Cote d'Ivoire for to face charges.

#### **4. Cote d'Ivoire listed as African top country for hackers**

According to an article in ***Fraternite Matin* (p. 32)**, Cote d'Ivoire has become a haven for hackers and other cyber criminals pushing it to the top of the list of African countries for cybercrime. Spear phishing, spamming and fake online dating profiles seeking money are the most frequent techniques that the hackers, mostly young people aged 15 to 32 use to deceive their victims, the paper said. The paper added that the proliferation of Internet cafes throughout the country was partly to blame.

January 16, 2013

**Today's Top Stories**

1. **Ivorian troops already in Mali as French infantry deploys**
2. **Mayoral and regional elections postponed, President Alassane Ouattara confirms**
3. **Talks between Ivorian Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan and the FPI delayed until Friday**
4. **Top aides to former Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo to appear in court**
5. **Ivorian businessmen set up task force to take advantage of incentives offered under AGOA**

**1. Ivorian troops already in Mali as French infantry deploys**

According to a report in ***Nord Sud Quotiden* (p. 11)**, a contingent of Ivorian soldiers has been in Mali since Friday to support on-going military operations. The Ivorian soldiers are part of the international military mission for Mali known as MISMA, the daily said. The information was released by the Ivorian military which did not specify the number of soldiers sent. The commander of the Ivorian contingent, Col. Cherif Moussa, the paper added, led last year's meetings of heads of defense from the members of the West African regional bloc ECOWAS to discuss military options.

**2. Mayoral and regional elections postponed, President Alassane Ouattara confirms**

During his visit to Germany where he is scheduled to meet with Chancellor Angela Merkel this week, President Alassane Ouattara said yesterday that the local elections are going to be pushed back. The information was reported by ***Fraternite Matin* (p. 7)** which noted that the decision to postpone the elections is to allow more time for candidates to register. "Local elections are the basis of democracy...I want them to be inclusive," the paper reported the Ivorian president as saying. The president added that an inclusive process is important as these elections are about participation and investment in democracy at the local level.

**3. Talks between Ivorian Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan and the FPI delayed until Friday**

According to an article in ***Notre Voie* (p. 4)**, discussions between Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan and the leadership of the FPI are scheduled to be held on Friday. Yesterday's meeting was postponed after FPI Interim President Sylvain Miaka Oureto said additional time was needed to go through the agenda of the meeting.

***Soir Info* (p. 3)** noted that the FPI interim president said his party has concerns that the government must commit to addressing such as financial support for opposition parties.

***Le Patriote* (p. 2)**, for its part, noted that the FPI has no real intention to sit down and dialogue with the government which is the reason for the multiple delays.

#### **4. Top aides to former Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo to appear in court**

Top aides to former Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo are to appear in court in Abidjan over their role during the post-electoral crisis. According to ***Le Nouveau Reveil (p. 4)***, Mr. Gbagbo's Prime Minister Gilbert Ake Ngbo, ex-Minister of Health Christine Adjobi and presidential advisor Desire Dallo are among the 90 people to be tried. The three mentioned were recently granted bail in what was seen as a movement towards national reconciliation.

#### **5. Ivorian businessmen set up task force to take advantage of incentives offered under AGOA**

According to a report in ***Le Nouveau Reveil (p. 10)***, in a bid to ensure incentives offered under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) are efficiently addressed, Ivorian businessmen yesterday set up a task force. Dubbed AGOA-CI, the working group, headed by Ivorian Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan, will define strategic plans to increase trade with the United States, the paper said.

January 15, 2013

**Today's Top Stories**

- 1. A protracted war possible in neighboring Mali with threats to spread to Cote d'Ivoire**
- 2. Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan meets with other political parties over mayoral and regional elections**
- 3. Prospects good for the reintegration of former combatants**

**1. A protracted war possible in neighboring Mali with threats to spread to Cote d'Ivoire**

According to an article in *Fraternite Matin* (p. 21) ongoing military actions in neighboring Mali may lead to a long-term engagement given the complexity of the situation and the strong determination of the jihadists to fight back indefinitely. Despite French airstrikes, Islamists seized yesterday Diabali, a town 245 miles north of Mali's capital city Bamako, the paper said. According to *L'Inter* (p. 8) this development underscores the difficulties French and ECOWAS troops will face in their confrontation with the Islamists and separatists.

*Le Quotidien d'Abidjan* (p. 6) noted that the conflict could spread to Cote d'Ivoire as the Islamists have threaten that the country was their next target.

**2. Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan meets with other political parties over mayoral and regional elections**

As part of consultations with other Ivorian political parties, Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan met yesterday in Abidjan with the leadership of the RHDP coalition. The information was reported by *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* (p. 7) which noted that discussions focused on arrangements to be made ahead of the mayoral and regional elections. "As instructed by the President, I am reaching out to political leaders in a bid to find common ground on the forthcoming elections," the paper reported the Ivorian Prime Minister as saying. "A meeting with the FPI is also on the agenda," he added. That meeting is likely to be held today according to FPI interim Secretary General Richard Kodjo.

In a related development, the paper noted that the local elections, initially planned for February 24, will be postponed. Although the decision has not been officially announced, the paper said that the postponement was mentioned yesterday by Government spokesperson Bruno Kone Nabagne during a radio interview.

**3. Prospects good for the reintegration of former combatants**

In a report in *Fraternite Matin* (pp. 4-5) Fidele Sarassoro, Director of the ADDR (Agency in charge of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration) said that the DDR program for former combatants is on the right track. Speaking Sunday at a press conference, Mr. Sarassoro noted that to date, a total of 443 ex-combatants have been trained and are now working as prison guards. Similar projects are being created to allow the reintegration of 60,000 other former combatants, he said, adding that farming and agriculture are promising sectors to explore.

**January 14, 2013**

**Today's Top Stories**

1. *Attorney General Simplicie Koffi Kouadio and two other officials from the Ivorian judiciary dismissed over New Year's Eve stampede*
2. ***State workers' union calls for a nationwide strike over stalled salary increases***
3. ***West African leaders to meet in Abidjan for an emergency summit over the Malian crisis***
4. ***U.S.-sponsored NGO calls on journalists to help implement new strategies for elimination of HIV in children***

**1. Attorney General Simplicie Koffi Kouadio and two other officials from the Ivorian judiciary dismissed over New Year's Eve stampede**

According to a statement read yesterday on **RTI**, Ivorian Attorney General Simplicie Koffi Kouadio and two other high-level officials from the Ivorian judiciary were removed Saturday from their positions. The story was the subject of banner headlines in most of the daily papers on Monday. According to **L'Inter (p. 3)**, the decision could be traced to the New Year's Eve stampede that claimed the lives of more than 60 people in Abidjan. The paper alleged that the Attorney General and his colleagues are suspected of negligence in dealing with the probe ordered by the government to shed light on circumstances that led to the deadly incident. Citing people close to the case, the daily said that the way the case was handled by Mr. Koffi was likely the reason for his removal.

**Soir Info (p. 3)** carried a similar account, qualifying the government's decision as "an administrative sanction." According to the daily, Mr. Koffi and the government were at odds after the former concluded in his findings that the small number of law enforcements agents present during the fireworks show was, in part, the cause of the tragedy.

Still on the issue, **Notre Voie (p. 3)** argued that the three men were the scapegoats for the stampede.

**2. State workers' union calls for a nationwide strike over stalled salary increases**

According to an article in **L'Inter (p. 13)** the main employee union for Ivorian civil servants said it will call for a nationwide strike next week if the government fails to implement salary increases. Speaking Saturday at a press conference in Abidjan, Mr. Apollinaire Tape Djedje, chairman of Cote d'Ivoire's civil servant union, COSYFOCI, said that commitments the government has made on multiple occasions have so far not been realized. "We want a clear schedule outlining the dates for the payments of our overdue entitlements and we want our salary adjustment decision to take affect without further delay," the paper reported him as saying adding, however, that there is still room for discussion.

**3. West African leaders to meet in Abidjan for an emergency summit over the Malian crisis**

Leaders from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are scheduled to meet in Abidjan on Saturday to discuss developments in Mali. The information was reported by **Le Patriote (p. 2)** which noted that the meeting will be held to make decisions in advance of the deployment of some 3,300 troops from ECOWAS. Niger, Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Senegal have already pledged to send troops for an African-led intervention force in Mali where separatists and Islamists are confronting the Malian forces.

In a separate development, the paper noted that the French airstrikes that started Friday are to continue as additional troops arrived Saturday in Bamako, Mali from bases in Cote d'Ivoire and Chad.

This announcement came as the FPI, the party of former president Laurent Gbagbo, called on the Ivorian government to send troops to support military operations in Mali. The information was reported by **Le Nouveau Courrier (p. 5)**.

#### **4. U.S.-sponsored NGO calls on journalists to help implement new strategy for elimination of HIV in children**

According to an article in **Notre Voie (p. 8)**, the Center for Communication Programs (CCP) held a workshop for journalists to help respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Cote d'Ivoire. The paper said the USAID-sponsored group held the event to train journalists on the implementation of PMTCT (Preventing Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV). The bottom-line of the training, the paper said, was to engage journalists in the fight against the disease by informing the public on PMTCT which can help reduce new HIV infection among children.